

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MADRID 01642 130648Z

13

ACTION EUR-25

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USIA-15 IO-14 DRC-01 SAM-01 /116 W

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R 121711Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8375

INFO AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 1642

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, SP, SOCI, VT

SUBJECT: EPISCOPATE ISSUES STATEMENT REGARDING BISHOP ANOVEROS CRISIS

REF MADRID 1581 AND PREVIOUS

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. SPANISH EPISCOPATE ISSUED STATEMENT OVER WEEKEND DESIGNED TO COOL PASSIONS, CALLING FOR DIALOGUE WITH GOVT, STRESSING THAT ANOVEROS HAD HAD NO INTENTION OF ATTACKING NATIONAL UNITY IN HIS FAMOUS PASTORAL, BUT WHICH AT SAME TIME STRONGLY DEFENDED CHURCH'S

RIGHTS IN TEMPORAL AREAS. BALL IS NOW IN GOVT'S COURT. END SUMMARY.

2. ON MAR 9, PERMANENT COMMITTEE OF SPANISH BISHOPS CONFERENCE, AFTER TWO DAYS OF MEETINGS IN WHICH BOTH BISHOP ANOVEROS OF BILBAO AND PAPAL NUNCIO PARTICIPATED ISSUED A FORMAL COMMUNIQUE REGARDING ANOVEROS AND HIS CONTROVERSIAL PASTORAL OF FEB 24.

3. TEXT OF STATEMENT WAS IN SOME RESPECTS CONCILIATORY, WHILE AT SAME TIME FIRMLY MAINTAINING CHURCH'S PREROGATIVES AND RIGHTS. THUS, IT DENIED THAT BISHOP ANOVEROS IN HIS PASTORAL HAD HAD ANY INTENTION OF ATTACKING NATIONAL UNITY AND SEWING DISCORD AND IT STRESSED THAT ANOVEROS' LONG AND DEDICATED EPISCOPAL SERVICE IN
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 MADRID 01642 130648Z

PAMPLONA, MALAGA, CADIZ, AND BILBAO HAD ALWAYS DEMONSTRATED HIS

"CONSTANT LOVE OF SPAIN AND RESPECT AND LOYALTY FOR ITS NATIONAL UNITY".

4. MORE THAN BALANCING OFF ITS CONCILIATORY ASPECTS, HOWEVER, STATEMENT STRONGLY REITERATED A NUMBER OF BASIC PREROGATIVES OF THE SPANISH EPISCOPATE UNDER THE PRESENT CONCORDAT, INCLUDING (1) AS STRONG REMINDER OF THE RIGHT OF ANDY BISHOP TO ADMINISTER HIS DIOCESE WITH FULL LIBERTY; (2) THE RIGHT OF A BISHOP TO PREACH GOSPEL BASED ON CONCRETE TEMPORAL PROBLEMS WHICH AFFECT HIS DIOCESE; AND (3) THE RESERVATION TO THE HOLY SEE OF THE EXCLUSIVE RIGHT OF JUDGING THE PASTORAL ACTIONS OF BISHOPS AND A REMINDER TO THE CIVIL AUTHORITIES THAT, SHOULD THEY BELIEVE SUCH ACTIONS VIOLATE THE JURIDICAL CODES, THEY CAN ONLY PURSUE THE MATTER THROUGH CONCORDATORY CHANNELS.

5. THE EPISCOPAL STATEMENT ENDS WITH AN APPEAL IN WHICH THEY INDICATE THAT A DIALOGUE AND UNDERSTANDING ARE ALWAYS POSSIBLE AND THAT TO ACHIEVE ONE THE BISHOPS ARE DETERMINED TO EXPEND EVERY EFFORT.

6. EXTRAORDINARY SESSIONS OF THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE OF THE BISHOPS CONFERENCE CONTINUED ALL DAY ON MAR 10 AND 11. A SURPRISING NEW DEVELOPMENT WAS THE ARRIVAL IN MADRID ON MARCH 11 OF MSGR. AGNELLO ACERBI FROM THE VATICAN CHIEF ASSISTANT TO THE VATICAN'S ARCHBISHOP CASEROLI. ACERBI ATTENDED ONE OF THE MAR 11 SESSIONS. ACCORDING TO OFFICIAL SPOKESMAN OF EPISCOPATE MEETING, ACERBI CAME EXPRESSLY TO DELIVER COMMUNICATION FROM HOLY SEE TO ANOVEROS PERSONALLY. COMMITTEE'S SESSIONS ENDED THE EVENING OF MAR 11.

7. COMMENT: THE BISHOP'S MAR 9 STATEMENT, PARTICULARLY THE DENIAL OF ANOVEROS INTENTION TO ATTACK NATIONAL UNITY HAVE HELPED TO DEFUSE SITUATION AND COULD BE INTERPRETED AS A PARTIAL APOLOGY (ALTHOUGH WITH VARIOUS IMPORTANT RESERVATIONS). BALL IS NOW IN GOVT'S COURT AND KEY QUESTION IS WHAT IF ANYTHING GOVERNMENT MAY DO NOW AND WHETHER IT WILL ACCEPT THE STATEMENT AS SUFFICIENT TO CALM ITS IRE. IT IS RUMORED THAT THE GOVT FAILING ITS ATTEMPTS TO HAVE ANOVEROS TRANSFERRED OR EXPELLED AT THIS TIME, HAD AT LEAST WANTED A FORMAL PUBLIC CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MADRID 01642 130648Z

STATEMENT BY ANOVEROS IN WHICH THE BISHOP WOULD PRESUMABLY (1) PUBLICLY PROFESS LOYALTY TO THE PRINCIPLES OF SPAIN'S NATIONAL MOVEMENT, OR (2) PUBLICLY EXPRESS LOYALTY TO THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE STATE. ANOVEROS' PROFESSED "LOVE FOR SPAIN", ALBEIT COUPLED WITH HIS LOYALTY TO NATIONAL UNITY, MAY NOT SATISFY GOVT. WHAT IS MORE, GOVT IS REPORTEDLY DISSATISFIED THAT THIS SEMI-APOLOGY WAS MADE BEHIND THE CLOAK OF THE BISHOP'S CONFERENCE AND NOT DIRECTLY BY ANOVEROS HIMSELF.

8. ALTHOUGH GOS MAY CONSIDER THE MAR 9 EPISCOPATE STATEMENT AS NOT ENTIRELY SATISFACTORY, IT MAY CONCLUDE THAT THE SITUATION SHOULD BE DIFFUSED ENTIRELY AND THEREFORE DECIDE TO REFRAIN FROM FURTHER COMMENT. SOME OBSERVERS BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT GOVT WILL ISSUE SOME FORM OF STATEMENT IN REPLY TO THE THE EIPSCOPATE'S MAR 9 STATEMENT, POSSIBLY AFTER MAR 15 CABINET MEETING.

9. IT IS WIDELY RUMORED THAT FRANCO HIMSELF HAS BEEN PERSONALLY VERY MUCH INVOLVED IN THE CIRSIS DURING THE PAST WEEK AND MAY HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR AVOIDANCE TO DATE OF A SHOWDOWN, ALTHOUGH HE MAY NOT HAVE BEEN INVOLVED INITIALLY IN THE CASE. IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT THE MAR 9 BISHOPS' STATEMENT FOLLOWED UPON A REPORTED COMMENT EARLIER IN THE WEEK BY THE SPANISH AMBASSADOR TO THE VATICAN TO A NEWSMAN THAT SOME FORM OF APOLOGY BY ANOVEROS MIGHT HELP THE SITUATION, PARTICULARLY IF THE BISHOP DISAVOWED ANY INTENTION TO QUESTION NATIONAL UNITY.

10. THE GOVERNMENT'S OBJECTIVE MAY HAVE ORIGINALLY BEEN TO SEEK TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF DIVISIONS IN THE EPISCOPATE, SINCE IT WAS WELL-KNOWN THAT SUCH BISHOPS AS CARDINALS TARANCON AND GONZALEZ HAD CONSIDERED THAT PASTORAL "INOPPORTUNE" AND HAD TRIED TO DISSUADE ANOVEROS FROM GOING AHEAD WITH IT. IF THIS WAS THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION AND IT THOUGHT IT WOULD RECEIVE SUPPORT FROM IMPORTANT SEGMENTS IN THE EPISCOPATE, THE GOVERNMENT WAS SADLY MISTAKEN, SINCE THE CRISIS HAS HAD THE OPPOSITE EFFECT OF UNITING THE ENTIRE EPISCOPATE BEHIND THEIR THREATENED BROTHER BROTHER BISHOP FROM BILBAO.

11. IT IS ALSO STILL WIDELY RUMORED THAT HEADS MAY
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 MADRID 01642 130648Z

ROLL IN THE CABINET, PERHAPS A FEW MONTHS HENCE WHEN THE CRISIS IS OVER, BECAUSE OF WHAT IS GENERALLY ACKNOWLEDGED TO HAVE BEEN THE GOVT'S INITIAL MISHANDLING OF THE CRISIS. THERE IS A WIDE AND DIVERSE RANGE OF NAMES BEING RUMORED OF MINISTERS WHO MIGHT POSSIBLY BE OUSTED OVER THIS EPISODE, AND THEY INCLUDE JUSTICE MINISTER RUIZ JARABO, INFORMATION MINISTER CABANILLAS, FOREIGN MINISTER CORTINA, MINISTER OF THE PRESIDENCY CARRO MARTINEZ, INTERIOR MINISTER GARCIA HERNANDEZ, AND EDUCATION MINISTER MARTINEZ ESTERUELAS.

12. NEGOTIATIONS ARE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE ON BOTH THE ANOVEROS QUESTION AND ON THE LARGER ISSUE OF CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS, WHICH HAS BEEN GIVEN A MAJOR JOLT BY THE ANOVEROS CRISIS. AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF ARIAS NAVARRO'S

REMINDER FEB 12 TO THE CHURCH TO STAY OUT OF TEMPORAL
MATTERS, THE CHURCH'S RESTATEMENT OF THIS RIGHT IN SUPPORTING
ANOVERAS LEAVES CHURCH AND STATE AS FAR APART AS EVER
ON THE BASIC ISSUE.
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